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Monday, 25 September 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 9

General debate

The President: Before giving the floor to the first speaker in the general debate, I should like to remind members of the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 22 September, that congratulations should not be expressed inside the General Assembly Hall itself after a speech has been delivered.

In this connection, may I also remind members of another decision taken by the Assembly at the same meeting: that speakers in the general debate, after delivering their statements, would leave the Assembly Hall through room GA-200, located behind the podium, before returning to their seats.

I should also like to remind representatives that in accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, the list of speakers will be closed on Wednesday, 27 September 1995, at 6 p.m. May I request delegations to be good enough to provide estimated speaking times that are as accurate as possible so that we can plan our meetings in an orderly way.

I now call on the first speaker in the general debate, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brazil, my good friend His Excellency Mr. Luiz Felipe Palmeira Lampreia.

Mr. Lampreia (Brazil) *(spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation)*: It gives me great pleasure to make use of our common language to congratulate you, Sir, on your election. We are honoured to see a Portuguese statesman, a friend of Brazil, and a representative of our commonwealth of Portuguese-speaking countries presiding over this session of the General Assembly, a session that is bound to become a milestone in the history of the United Nations. My Government is confident that, under your skilled guidance, our deliberations will forge the kind of understanding and commitment capable of asserting the credibility and pre-eminence of our Organization in world affairs.

Let me also express our heartfelt appreciation to another friend of Brazil, Minister Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, for his outstanding work at the helm of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

(spoke in English)

I wish to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and the Secretariat for their continued dedication to the United Nations and for their relentless work in carrying out their duties to the international community.

In opening this debate today, Brazil wishes to renew its unwavering commitment to the principles and purposes embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. These principles and purposes set a mandate for peace

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and development, and are as relevant today as they were 50 years ago. They coincide entirely with the aspirations of Brazilian society. Our Constitution reflects them as the supreme values of our political and social life in democracy.

I am proud to address the Assembly as the representative of a country that has widened its commitments to democracy and human rights, to sustainable development with economic stability, to peace and disarmament — a country at peace with itself, constantly striving to extend its presence in the world by strengthening traditional partnerships and fostering new ones. We expect from our partners an attitude of cooperation commensurate with Brazil's growing participation in world markets and with its contribution to international peace and security.

Democracy in Brazil continues to show extraordinary vitality under the leadership of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Our institutional framework is being strengthened, and progress in the social sphere is generating a renewed sense of citizenship among Brazilians.

While strictly enforcing existing mechanisms, President Cardoso is proposing legislation that will ensure the full observance of human rights. Both at home and abroad, Brazil's human rights policies are based on transparency and full cooperation with civil society. Together with strong governmental action to tackle the country's social problems, measures to promote and protect human rights will greatly contribute to redress the unjust distribution of wealth that unfortunately still prevails in Brazil.

Long-needed structural reforms and privatization are being carried out, paving the way for the consolidation of economic stability and sustained economic growth.

Brazil has achieved a high degree of economic openness, thus accelerating its integration into the international economy and creating more favourable conditions for increased participation in international trade, technology transfers and productive capital flows. Inflation has been reduced to the lowest level in a quarter of a century, allowing the country to pursue policies that benefit the poor and the underprivileged.

We are also engaged in a broad and dynamic process of open economic integration with our neighbours, adding economic substance to the political harmony that we enjoy in our region. MERCOSUR — a customs union bringing together Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay — is a highly successful political and economic reality, a partner ready for business and cooperation with all countries and regions.

Brazil has taken significant steps to further strengthen its commitments to disarmament and to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. President Cardoso publicly stated that Brazil has forgone the development, acquisition and export of long-range military missiles. Congress is about to approve the Chemical Weapons Convention, and comprehensive legislation on export controls of dual-use technology is being finalized. Having decided unilaterally to abide by the Missile Technology Control Regime's guidelines, the Brazilian Government is currently discussing its participation in the regime.

Brazil's commitment to peace and understanding was clearly illustrated by its recent role, alongside the other three Guarantor countries of the Rio de Janeiro Protocol, in bringing together two friendly nations in our region — Ecuador and Peru.

Brazilian forces are actively participating in various United Nations peace-keeping efforts, particularly in Angola, a country that shares with Brazil a common heritage and is finally on the verge of healing the wounds inflicted by years of internal strife. We are also proud of the role played by our Government and our forces in the peaceful transition to an elected government in Mozambique.

After too many years of difficulties, Brazilians have recovered their pride. The country has entered a cycle of long-term growth and greater long-term opportunities, an era of optimism and confidence. It is in this spirit that Brazilian diplomacy is prepared to approach the world and to work within the United Nations.

As I reflect upon the events that have taken place over this past year, I am tempted to say that

> "it was the best of times; it was the worst of times".

It has been a time for legitimate hope, but also a time of fear and horror; a time for accomplishments, but also a time of frustration; a time for confidence in a brighter future for mankind, but also a time of regret for the fact that peace, freedom, justice and well-being are

still unattained in many places in the world; a time in which risks and opportunities coexist side by side.

Current patterns in international affairs converge on the twin concepts that inspired the revolution of the 1990s: democracy and economic freedom with social justice. This is the main thrust that will shape the coming century and ensure liberty and prosperity for all.

The very concept of power has changed. A country's sovereignty and its capacity to satisfy the needs of its people depend increasingly on good social indicators, political stability, economic competitiveness, and scientific and technological progress, not on military strength. It is now widely understood that the fulfilment of national pride lies in democracy, development, trade and economic wealth, rather than in the quest for hegemony or territorial gains.

A new era of freedom is at hand. Countries are peacefully seeking their place in their regions and in the world, helping in the creation of wealth through trade and cooperation. Emerging economies have become a significant force around the world, benefiting from globalization, greater economic freedom and the continued growth of international trade. Economic integration has led to stronger regional ties.

Reconstruction and enhanced participation in international affairs are seen in many parts of the world, just as others continue to prosper and grow in peace. New or renewed partnerships have emerged in the five continents.

The Middle East is finally following the path of dialogue and understanding, through a peace process that we firmly support and encourage. Angola and Mozambique are the new promises of southern Africa, furthering regional peace and conciliation as the South Africans have done.

Latin America, and in particular the Southern Cone countries, has continued to show vitality both at the political level, with democracy fully at work, and at the economic level, with freedom and openness leading to the resumption of growth and the expansion of trade.

The United Nations has kept its role in the maintenance of international peace and security. A broader agenda for the remainder of this century is under consideration. Positive initiatives are under way to ensure that the Organization is capable of more effectively promoting peace and development. Reform of the system is also due to make it more responsive to the challenges that lie ahead.

The promotion of civil liberties and the quest for equal rights among women and men, minorities and majorities, weak and strong are shaping the debate, guiding action and strengthening citizenship all over the world.

These are indeed times of positive change. But even as one celebrates these positive trends, one is painfully aware of the manifold threats posed by the persistence of poverty and violence in many areas of the world. The images of the former Yugoslavia are living proof of past failures and present challenges and misperceptions. They remind us of how much needs to be done to fulfil the promises embodied in the United Nations Charter.

Extreme poverty and unemployment emerge as perhaps the most pervasive of the international issues, affecting developed and developing countries alike, corroding the social fabric while fostering extremism on the part of individuals and engendering short-sighted solutions on the part of governments.

Terrorism, drug trafficking, organized crime, xenophobia and racism, ethnic cleansing, religious fanaticism and intolerance, and persistent violations of basic human rights continue to afflict millions of human beings. Misguided economic policies, financial speculation and the volatility of capital flows threaten markets on a global scale. Emerging economies, striving to consolidate stability and the resumption of growth while dealing with variables such as interest rates and commodity prices, have become increasingly vulnerable.

Disarmament continues to be an elusive goal. The promises heralded by the end of the cold war seem to have vanished in a cloud of vague excuses. The so-called peace dividends have yet to materialize. The world is theoretically less threatening and dangerous. Competitiveness, technological capability, economic strength and social indicators have become the standards of national power. Yet, more positive moves in disarmament and non-proliferation have been offset by anachronistic economic practices and irresponsible military endeavours.

Some countries continue to seek military strength and strategic power. Even as commitment to non-proliferation and support for nuclear disarmament

gain ground in Latin America, Africa and parts of Asia, nuclear tests painfully remind us of the threats and horrors that haunted the collective imagination during the cold-war years. Besides endangering the environment they encourage the resumption of a purposeless arms race in various parts of the world.

Nuclear testing undermines efforts towards disarmament and jeopardizes the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. Instead of helping the international community strengthen collective security mechanisms, certain countries persist in testing and improving their nuclear arsenals. We deplore it.

So where does the United Nations stand in the current international scene? How can it deal with the conflicting and ambivalent forces operating in the world today? Where does its responsibility begin and where does it end? What can we do to realize the vision of our founding fathers? These are some of the questions that come to mind as we prepare to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization.

It is certainly true that the Organization may have seemed at times to be overwhelmed by the challenges before it. But it is also true that the shortcomings over these past 50 years would have been greater had it not been for the United Nations, a universal conscience, an instrument for peace and understanding, as no other instrument has ever been, with a moral authority that the peoples of the world have learned to recognize and support.

In 1941 when the United Nations was but a distant dream overcast by war, Franklin Delano Roosevelt defined the four freedoms upon which a true community of nations should be built. They were — and I find it useful to recall Roosevelt's own inspiring words — the freedom of speech and expression; the freedom of every person to worship God in his own way; the freedom from want, which

> "translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peace time life for its inhabitants";

and the freedom from fear, which

> "translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor".

Providing mankind with these four freedoms was the challenge that ultimately gave birth to the United Nations. Yet, these four freedoms are still largely unattained. They remain an inspiration and a goal.

In the past 50 years, the nations of the world have used this podium to voice their hopes and concerns and to express their feelings about a true international partnership based on peace and prosperity. The United Nations has undoubtedly represented a call for consensus, a moral and ethic force, a promoter of political will and action, a substitute for confrontation and dispute.

The time has come for us to carefully assess the achievements and shortcomings of the United Nations in order to set the course for the next half-century. The time has come for us to create the conditions for the United Nations of the twenty-first century.

In the aftermath of the Second World War the idea of an international body such as the United Nations may have seemed utopian, especially in the light of the failure of the League of Nations and of the tragedies and crimes that resulted from the pursuit of power politics, the kind of politics that led the world into war and its horrors.

While avoiding utopianism, the United Nations was designed to provide actual instruments of diplomatic interaction capable of replacing power politics by ethical values and of promoting conflict prevention and conflict resolution through negotiation and dialogue.

With a pledge to peace and security on the one hand and to development on the other, the United Nations helped to write important chapters of contemporary history, such as the building of a new pattern of relationship between developed and developing countries, the search for development, disarmament, the protection of human rights and human dignity, decolonization, the struggle against apartheid and the condemnation of tyranny and oppression.

In this process important organizations such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and decisive forums such as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), and the several other United Nations conferences dedicated to global issues, have played a paramount role. In these forums we have enhanced commitments in the areas of cooperation for development, the law of the sea, the rights of children, the environment and sustainable development, human

rights, population, social development and the rights of women.

We have certainly accomplished one part of our dreams. So why not set our eyes on further accomplishments? We look at the recent past and find the United Nations at the centre of the most important international events. Even when its action has been constrained by circumstances, the United Nations always displayed moral strength. We look at the present and we see a United Nations limited by its structure, struggling very hard to take advantage of its own experience to adapt to changing world realities in order to remain the foremost international force.

And so Brazil confidently looks to the future. Peace and development in the years to come will depend largely on our capacity to renew and reform the United Nations. In institutions, as in human beings, reassessment and reform are a sign of vitality, of maturity, of responsibility. As Brazil has already pointed out a normative gap has opened up between some of the provisions of the Charter and the realities of today's world.

The fact is that most of the structures of the United Nations remain those crafted 50 years ago. Back then, the world was entering a new phase of power politics and confrontation that no longer applies. The membership of the United Nations was less than one third of what it is today. The concept of development was not at the core of an international agenda. Significant players in the developed and in the developing world had yet to achieve the influential role they have today.

New realities demand innovative solutions. Greater expectations require stronger commitments. Nothing is more emblematic of the need to bring the United Nations into line with the realities of the post-cold-war world than the reform of the Security Council. As a catalyst for other much-needed reforms within the United Nations system, reform of the Security Council is an imperative that should no longer be put off.

In order to carry out its mandate in the field of international peace and security on behalf of all Member States, the Security Council must have unquestionable legitimacy. As is well known, legitimacy ultimately rests on representativeness.

Reform cannot entail a wholesale or indiscriminate enlargement of the Security Council, much less an insufficient one predicated on the convenience of a limited number of States. Above all, it will be essential to ensure a more equitable representation of developed and developing countries with both the capacity to act and an effective presence on a global scale.

The emergence of new economic powers and of a number of developing countries with global projection has significantly altered the dynamics of world politics. These players have come to the forefront of the international scene and should be present in the core group of permanent members, so that the Council's composition becomes more balanced and better reflects the diversity of world views.

A qualitative increase in the number of permanent members of the Security Council, together with an enlargement of the non-permanent membership, would correspond to the necessity of making it more authoritative and efficient in carrying out its increased responsibilities in the post-cold-war era.

Reform is not about the individual prestige of any country but about the prestige of the Security Council itself. Brazil, for its part, is ready to assume its responsibilities in this endeavour.

The same attention that is being given to improving the United Nations performance in the area of peace and security must be given to efforts in the area of strengthening international cooperation for development. Poverty and unemployment both in industrialized and in developing nations, economic instability and misguided economic policies affecting individual countries, as well as the persistence or the rise of various forms of protectionism, are factors that adversely affect sustained growth worldwide. These are issues that must be accorded high priority.

Unemployment cannot be used as a pretext that will ultimately lead to protectionism directed mainly against the developing countries. There is no use in trying to alleviate unemployment by accusing other people, by creating new forms of disguised protectionism, by putting a new strain on international relations. We must strengthen the role of the World Trade Organization as the mainstay of an open and non-discriminatory multilateral trade system. We must promote a broader coordination of macroeconomic policies and foster regional economic integration, and provide better and more effective cooperation in the areas of health, sanitation, education, the administration of justice and other areas of great social impact. We must widen the

decision-making circles in order to include countries whose contribution to these objectives can be instrumental.

The United Nations should be able to ensure implementation of the commitments reached at the highest level at the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, for much needs to be done to fulfil the promises that were made in Rio de Janeiro regarding international cooperation for sustainable development. The same kind of follow-up should apply to the commitments reached at subsequent international conferences on global issues.

These are the main goals to be achieved by a reform of the United Nations institutions that directly or indirectly deal with the issue of sustainable development. We firmly believe that a broad vision of reform of the United Nations institutions will lead to an improved, more efficient and revitalized Organization. For, as once stated in this very forum by a distinguished Brazilian statesman, Oswaldo Aranha, who presided over the first special session of the General Assembly, in 1947:

> "Above all, it is within our power to make the United Nations the sum total of justice, security and peace, or through our lack of wisdom to allow it to be transformed into one more sword to be wielded blindly by force and instinct." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, First Special Session, 68th plenary meeting, pp. 3 and 4)*

The United Nations will stand as the greatest symbol of the twentieth century as long as it is able to keep its vitality and effectively promote peace and development. Brazil is also committed to peace and democracy and believes that if all peoples of the world are free to express their ideas and to build their own destinies, democracy will be strengthened and will continue to serve the purpose of development and social justice. Brazil is also committed to, and knows that development depends on, an international environment of peace, cooperation and economic freedom.

As our Heads of State and Government prepare to gather in New York in October to celebrate the accomplishments of our Organization, let us hasten to create the necessary conditions for them to build for the future with the same impetus and boldness that inspired the international community 50 years ago. Let us make sure that through our unfaltering commitment and our timely action the United Nations will emerge stronger from the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, His Excellency Mr. Habib Ben Yahia.

Mr. Ben Yahia (Tunisia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to extend to you, Mr. President, our warmest and sincerest congratulations on your election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly. Through you, I should also like to pay tribute to the relations between my country and Portugal and to note our shared expectations for the Mediterranean region.

I would be remiss were I to fail to extend my warmest congratulations to your predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, President of the previous session of the Assembly, for the new impetus he gave to the Organization through the different working groups over which he presided. I should also like to pay a special tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the wisdom and determination with which he is carrying out his noble mission.

This session of the Assembly crowns a half century of the world Organization's efforts to preserve world peace. Today, the Organization is called upon to pave the way to a new era, one that we hope will be marked by solidarity in facing the tasks before us and the responsibility we all bear.

Since the end of the cold war the world has rid itself of the heavy burden of the fear of another world war, a war that would have led to untold catastrophes and tragedies. This development, albeit new, already seems to be part of the past given the speed of subsequent developments.

Even if East-West confrontation and the bipolarity of past decades have disappeared, new challenges have emerged over the past few years. Hotbeds of tension and instability have proliferated, in many regions of the world, and have taken root in the soil of ethnic and political hostilities that often take the form of armed confrontations within the borders of any one State. Such hostilities are often fuelled by extremes of hardship and by deteriorating economic and social conditions.

Some negative phenomena, such as terrorism, extremism and the illicit traffic in arms and drugs have also grown in a manner that is cause for concern as they undermine the stability of States.

Inherent in these new challenges are factors of disintegration and collapse that throw a long shadow over international peace and security and impose new threats that the international community should hasten to contain with decisive action which should not focus on their outward manifestations alone, but deal with their true underlying causes, namely economic underdevelopment and social backwardness.

In fact, these new situations which now face the world in the post-cold-war era make us realize that it is impossible to ensure lasting international peace and security by military means alone. Respect for law and international legality are prerequisites as are creation of conditions that would promote the economic and social development in an interdependent world. These, we believe, are the underpinnings upon which we should build a new world order.

Due to the developments the international community has been witnessing over the past few years, the United Nations Organization has come to shoulder new responsibilities towards international peace and security. These responsibilities are manifest in the unprecedented increase in the number of peace-keeping operations, as well as in new activities such as the supervision of elections and the rebuilding of State structures and the economic infrastructures of States. In addition, many of these activities have to do with the settlement of disputes within certain States.

While the United Nations has to provide assistance to countries that are ravaged by civil wars and internal conflicts, we, as members of the international community, are all called upon to mobilize our efforts and to strengthen our solidarity within the context of the efforts aimed at the maintenance of peace and to identify and resolve the underlying causes of such disputes. Proceeding from our belief in the fundamental principles set forth in the Secretary-General's "Agenda for Peace", particularly those relating to preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace building, Tunisia, during its presidency of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), called for stronger cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in the area of conflict prevention and the speedy resolution of disputes at minimum cost.

Here we should remind of the role of the central organ of the OAU's mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution, which has been given new impetus by President Ben Ali and other African leaders in order to make it an effective tool in the prevention and settlement of disputes in Africa.

In this context, Tunisia has hosted several meetings of this central body, which have resulted in the adoption of many important resolutions that have made it possible to address certain situations which, otherwise, would have called for intervention by the international community to keep peace or to prevent the outbreak of new conflicts. We believe that such efforts by this central organ of the OAU warrant additional support. The results of such efforts could be improved if the appropriate financial and logistical means were made available to the organ and if coordination were ensured between the United Nations and the OAU in this regard. We do hope that the recent tendency to give this matter some thought will lead to the identification of the ways and means whereby action by the international community in this direction will develop further. On this occasion, I should like, on behalf of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, to pay tribute to the international community for its valuable support to Tunisia during its presidency of the OAU, and to express particular appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, as well as to all those who have provided financial and logistical assistance to peace-keeping operations in Africa and to the States that have provided financial support to the fund created within the OAU mechanism for the settlement, management and prevention of disputes.

While some hotbeds of tension persist, some have been eliminated, and we do see a reduction in the danger of major conflagrations in the light of the significant progress made towards disarmament and the strengthening of the underpinnings of international security through the efforts of the United Nations, as well as an improvement in the climate of trust and understanding that we now feel in international relations.

In the area of weapons of mass destruction, Tunisia welcomed the signing of the Convention on chemical weapons. We believe it is a step that will lead to the elimination of an entire class of such weapons. This calls for further substantive steps to rid the world gradually of the threat of nuclear weapons, particularly in the wake of the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

As for the Middle East, many important steps have been taken towards genuine dialogue between the parties concerned.

Tunisia, which has been an active participant in the peace process since it began in Madrid, welcomes the agreement achieved yesterday between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, and hopes that it will be followed by other concrete steps towards ensuring the achievement of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people.

We must adopt the same approach in order to give new impetus to the negotiations between Syria and Israel on the one hand, and between Lebanon and Israel on the other in order to ensure the withdrawal from the occupied territories in the Golan and in southern Lebanon and the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

It goes without saying that the principles upon which the peace process was based, namely Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as General Assembly resolutions concerning the withdrawal from all Arab and Palestinian lands, including Holy Al-Quds, must be fully implemented. Al-Quds remains, for the Palestinian and the whole Islamic nation, a cornerstone for the settlement of the dispute.

We believe that it is time for the Israeli Government to demonstrate realism and political courage by rising above the very narrow view of security and relations with the neighbouring Arab States in order to allow the peoples of the region to live in harmony in increasing security and stability.

In the Arab Maghreb, Tunisia, which has always believed in international legality, calls, in the light of initiatives taken by Libya, for a rapid resolution of the Lockerbie affair in order to lift the embargo imposed on our Libyan brethren. The negative effects of that embargo have begun seriously to affect stability and development in all the countries of the region.

As for Iraq, Tunisia, which is satisfied with the progress that is being made in implementing United Nations resolutions, calls for lifting the embargo imposed on Iraq in order to mitigate the suffering of the Iraqi people. At the same time, Tunisia stresses the need to fully respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait and all the countries of the region. By the same token, we hope that agreement on the basis of the norms of international law and the behests of good-neighbourliness and respect for the territorial integrity of other States, will be reached in the dispute between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran on Abu Moussa and the Greater and Lesser Tumb Islands.

I should now like to address the crisis in Bosnia, which, in our view, constitutes an aberration that embodies a serious defiance to all humanity. This war puts us face to face with ideologies which, we thought, had become things of the past, but which have now resurfaced in the guise of "ethnic cleansing". The international community has the right to make use of the means provided by the United Nations Charter to force those who flout all civilized values and trample the most basic of human rights to accept the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to respect its territorial integrity.

Tunisia, which has always participated in the United Nations efforts to maintain international peace and security, is well-aware of the limitations of the narrow view that reduces the concept of security to the military dimension alone. Proceeding from this, Tunisia has supported from the outset the international community's initiative embodied in "An Agenda for Development". We believe that "An Agenda for Development", along with "An Agenda for Peace", help to enrich our thinking in the field of multilateral cooperation at a time when countries of the world are becoming increasingly open to market economics which, together with the consolidation of interdependence, have come to be the principal economic characteristics of world economy at the end of the 20th century.

In view of the irreversible globalization of economic concepts, the United Nations is called upon to play a fundamental role in formulating and implementing development policies. Such an important role should work in favour of the international community's efforts to restructure the United Nations and to increase its effectiveness. Tunisia, which has taken part in these efforts, believes that any restructuring process should help promote the universal nature of the Organization and strengthen its democratic posture, so that it may make a better contribution in the area of development. We believe that the process of restructuring must go hand-in-hand with a wider cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions in order to improve their input in development.

In this context, joint initiatives could be taken to ensure a better division of labour between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions with a view to increasing their effectiveness in the economic and

social fields and within the context of development in general. More specifically, as far as cooperation between the United Nations and other parties is concerned, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali has been calling, since 1989, from this very rostrum, for a development partnership between industrialized and developing countries. This initiative is a project for a new international cooperation based on a dynamic view of the security of all States. Through this proposal, Tunisia aims at creating a new system based on economic, political, social and democratic stability, because we believe that they are the very pillars of security. This Tunisian initiative is based on awareness of the organic link between development, democracy and stability. This overall view takes into account the aspirations of individuals and peoples who look forward to freedom and economic, social and cultural well-being.

The Tunisian view of security and development is anchored in the belief that extreme importance must be attached to the cultural and humanitarian aspects of international relations, particularly at the regional level. Proceeding from this belief, Tunisia has sought to consolidate its cultural and political ties with all the countries of the Arab Maghreb and of the Mediterranean. At the Maghreb level, in cooperation with the member States of the Arab Maghreb Union, Tunisia has worked to create an economic zone in the region. This has taken concrete shape in the Tunisian declaration of 1994 relating to the creation of a free zone as a first step in putting in place a Maghreb development strategy.

Tunisia's involvement in international economic affairs and its attempts to develop its interests with the region on the northern shores of the Mediterranean are among its basic foreign-policy tenets, enshrined in the partnership agreement with the European Union. This agreement is based on joint development and aims at creating a free zone that will allow Tunisia further activity within the economies of its European partners. It goes hand in hand with a policy of dialogue between the countries of the Mediterranean. On the 28th and 29th of July 1995, Tunisia hosted a preparatory meeting for the Mediterranean region to ensure the success of the meeting scheduled for next November in Barcelona. The Preliminary results of the Mediterranean dialogue give cause for optimism as they reflect a common desire to safeguard the Mediterranean region from international political convulsions and economic fluctuations while ensuring its harmonious development.

The United Nations is called upon today to develop a new concept based on the need to achieve security, development and democracy. These are the very principles in which Tunisia believes and for which we strive, domestically as well as internationally. In the field of development, the Tunisian strategy is based on the human element within a comprehensive vision that embraces all segments of society, and aims at building a balanced and unitary society.

In this context, I wish to stress in particular the importance that Tunisia attaches to the empowerment of women, the protection of the family and to highlight the fact that many achievements have been made in this context, particularly with regard to the adoption of structural, legal and administrative measures to promote the role of women and the family, economically and socially and to enhance the role of women in our development efforts. At the same time, Tunisia has acceded to many international conventions on the equality of women and men, the latest of which has been the Copenhagen agreement which relate to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Based on its rich experience in this context, Tunisia has played a very active role in the March 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and in the recent Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, whose positive results we commend.

In this new era, Tunisia will continue to support the efforts of the United Nations both in the areas of maintenance of peace and of development. We shall continue to participate in defining the features of the new world order and to call for upholding the law and the norms of international legality. It behoves the States of the world to share a joint vision of the world of tomorrow, so that it may be characterized by more solidarity and justice. We hope that the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations will reaffirm the commitment of the international community to an Organization without which we can never hope to build such a new world order.

The President: I now call on the Secretary of State of the United States of America, His Excellency the Honourable Warren Christopher.

Mr. Christopher (United States of America): It is a privilege to speak to the General Assembly today on behalf of the United States.

A half-century ago the General Assembly first met here in New York, across the river in a converted skating rink at Flushing Meadows. In those modest surroundings our predecessors began to put in place an ambitious framework that they hoped would keep the peace as successfully as they had prosecuted the war.

In the years since, the United Nations has helped bring peace, prosperity and hope to countless people around the world. Technological change has brought nations closer together than the founders of the United Nations could possibly have foreseen. The United Nations itself has been challenged in unforeseen ways. It has had to manage complex humanitarian emergencies, from civil wars to mass movements of refugees to health epidemics. This evolution has placed great strains on the Organization and has revealed the necessity for far-reaching changes in how it is run.

The Clinton Administration has vigorously made the case to our Congress and our people for continued American leadership at the United Nations. The United States made a commitment to the United Nations Charter 50 years ago, and we are determined to keep our commitment, including our financial obligations.

We will always remember that for millions of people around the world, the United Nations is far from a faceless institution. It is, as Harry Truman once said,

> "a case of food, a box of school books; it is a doctor who vaccinates children; it is an expert who shows people how to raise more rice and more wheat."

To millions more around the world, it is the difference between peace and war.

Economic and social development, as well as the protection of human rights, remain central to the United Nations mission. But the United Nations must change to meet new needs more effectively. When money is wasted in New York, Geneva or Vienna, when time is lost in bureaucratic inertia, the people who pay the price are those most vulnerable to famine, disease and violence.

It is time to recognize that the United Nations must direct its limited resources to the world's highest priorities, focusing on the tasks that it performs the best. The United Nations bureaucracy should be smaller, with a clear organizational structure and sharp lines of responsibility. Each programme must be held to a single simple standard: it must make a tangible contribution to the freedom, security and well-being of real people in the real world.

In the last year, under the leadership of Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, the groundwork for substantial change has been laid. The United Nations has an office with the functions of an inspector general and a mandate to crack down on waste and fraud. Under-Secretary-General Joe Connor has embarked on an aggressive campaign to improve the United Nations management culture, and we fully support his good work. The United Nations Secretariat has moved in the right direction by submitting a budget that begins to restrain spending, and now this momentum for reform must accelerate.

Let me propose a brief, concrete agenda for reform.

First, we must end United Nations programmes that have achieved their purpose, and we must consolidate programmes that overlap, especially in the economic and social agencies. The United Nations has more than a dozen organizations responsible for development, emergency response and statistical reporting. We should consider establishing a single agency for each of these functions. We should downsize the United Nations regional economic commissions. We should ensure that the functions of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development do not duplicate those of the new World Trade Organization (WTO), and we should adopt a moratorium on big United Nations conferences once the present series is completed, concentrating instead on meeting the commitments of those conferences that we have already held.

Secondly, we need to streamline the United Nations Secretariat to make it more efficient, accountable and transparent. Each part of the United Nations system should be subject to the scrutiny of an inspector general. The United Nations must not tolerate ethical or financial abuses, and its managers should be appointed and promoted on the basis of merit.

Thirdly, we should rigorously scrutinize proposals for new and extended peace-keeping missions, and we should improve the United Nations ability to respond rapidly when new missions are approved. We must agree on an equitable scale of peace-keeping assessments that reflects fully today's economic realities. And we should have a unified budget for peace-keeping operations.

Finally, we must maintain the effectiveness of the Security Council. Germany and Japan should become

permanent members, and we should ensure that all the world's regions are fairly represented, without making the Council too large and unwieldy.

We welcome the formation of the high-level group on reform, initiated under the leadership of the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Mr. Essy. Our goal must be that of a practical blueprint for United Nations reform and to ensure that it is adopted before the General Assembly finishes the work of its fiftieth session next fall. The way forward is clear; we have already seen and studied countless studies and reports. Now the time has come to act on the best proposals.

As the Assembly knows, in my country there have been serious efforts to curtail our support for the United Nations. The President and I, and our entire Administration, believe it would be reckless to turn away from an Organization that helps mobilize the support of other nations for goals that are consistent with American and global interests. But to sustain support for the United Nations among the American people and among the people of other nations, it is not enough that we defend the institution. The best argument against retreat is further reform. Tangible progress in that direction will help us win the battle for United Nations support that we are waging in the United States.

The United Nations must emerge from the reform process better able to meet its fundamental goals, including the preservation of peace and security. From Korea to the Persian Gulf to Haiti, the United Nations has provided a mandate to its Members as they carried out their responsibilities. The United Nations own Blue Helmets have helped nations create the basic conditions of peace in some of the most difficult situations imaginable around the world, even though they have not always achieved their intended purpose.

Recently, a young Haitian father was asked what the peace-keeping forces had achieved in his country. He answered,

> "We walk freely. We sleep quietly. There are no men who come for us in the night."

In Haiti, as, for example, in Cambodia, Mozambique and El Salvador, the United Nations has shown that peace-keeping, despite its limitations, has been an enormously useful instrument.

One region where United Nations forces and the international community have played a critical role is the Middle East. Another historic milestone will be marked this Thursday, in Washington, when Israel and the Palestinians sign their agreement to implement phase two of the Declaration of Principles. That agreement will bring to life a goal first set many years ago in the Camp David accords: to protect Israel's security and to give Palestinians throughout the West Bank control over their daily lives. The international community and the United Nations must continue to support this process, both diplomatically and economically.

There is no question that the United Nations has never undertaken a mission more difficult than the one in the former Yugoslavia. The limitations of that mission are all too well known, but we all must recognize that it has provided relief for hundreds of thousands of people and has saved literally thousands of lives. Today, diplomacy backed by force has given the United States and the international community an opportunity to move forward on a track that is producing genuinely hopeful results. The United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are working effectively together to try to bring peace to the region. On 8 September in Geneva, the parties to the conflict accepted the fundamental goal that the Security Council has often expressed: the continuation of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single State within its internationally recognized borders. I will be meeting with the Foreign Ministers of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia later today, and at that time I will urge them — implore them — to maintain the momentum towards peace and to establish constitutional structures for Bosnia.

The framers of the Charter of the United Nations created this institution to meet threats to peace and security posed by aggression and armed conflict. Those threats are still, unfortunately, very much with us. But today, the world also faces a new set of security challenges, including proliferation, terrorism, international crime and narcotics, as well as the far-reaching consequences of damage to the environment. These have assumed a new and dangerous scope in a more interdependent world. As President Clinton said in San Francisco in June, the

> "new forces of integration carry within them the seeds of disintegration and destruction".

While, as I said earlier, new technologies have brought us closer together, they also have made it easier

for terrorists, drug dealers and other international criminals to acquire weapons of mass destruction, to set up cocaine cartels and to hide their ill-gotten gains. The collapse of communism has shattered dictatorships, to be sure, but it has also left the political and legal institutions of newly liberated nations even more vulnerable to those who seek to subvert them.

Although these threats are sometimes sponsored by States, they increasingly follow no flag. Each of us must vigorously fight these enemies on our own, but we will never be truly secure until we effectively fight them together. That is the new security challenge for the global community, and it must be the new security mission for the United Nations.

There is no single area in which the United Nations can make a more significant contribution than in that of non-proliferation. Fifty years ago, the United States was the only country capable of making a nuclear bomb. Today many countries have the technology that would enable them to turn a fist-sized chunk of plutonium into a bomb as small as a suitcase. That is one reason why more than 170 nations agreed, at a conference held here last May and effectively chaired by Ambassador Dhanapala, to extend for all time the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. That is an achievement we must rejoice in but also build on.

I should like to outline some steps in the field of non-proliferation. First, we should have a comprehensive test-ban treaty ready for signature by the time we meet here next September. As President Clinton announced last month, the United States is committed to a true zero-yield test ban. We urge other nations to join us in that commitment.

Secondly, we should immediately start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Those who have been most vocal in calling for nuclear disarmament should recognize that it is essential to ban future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Thirdly, we should push forward with the historic reductions of the nuclear arsenals of the United States and countries of the former Soviet Union. I call on the United States Senate, as well as on the Russian Duma, to approve the treaty on further reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms (START II) so that we can lock in deep cuts in our strategic nuclear arsenals. In addition, Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin are working together to ensure the safety, transparency and irreversibility of nuclear-arms reductions.

As part of this process, President Yeltsin will host a nuclear safety and security summit in Moscow next spring. This summit should have a very ambitious agenda, including a declaration of principles on nuclear safety. We look to this summit to address the worldwide problems of nuclear-waste management, including those of ocean dumping. The summit should also promote a plan of action to safeguard nuclear materials, a plan that should include new measures to prevent criminals and terrorists from acquiring nuclear materials for use in weapons.

Finally, we should push for the earliest possible entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. President Clinton has urged the United States Senate to act promptly on its ratification, and to stop holding the START II Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention hostage to unrelated issues. The world has witnessed the effects of poison gas too many times in this century — on European battlefields during the First World War, in Ethiopia and Manchuria during the 1930s, and against Iranian soldiers and innocent Kurdish civilians in the 1980s. The Chemical Weapons Convention will make every nation safer, and we need it now.

The United Nations is also playing an invaluable role in focusing attention on pressing regional proliferation problems. In Iraq, the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and its Chairman, Rolf Ekeus, continue to uncover horrific details about Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction.

Under Saddam Hussein, Iraq developed a deadly biological-weapons capacity hidden from view. It was conducting research to turn some of the most toxic substances known to man into weapons of war. We know that Saddam succeeded in putting anthrax and botulism in bombs and missile warheads. In December 1990, he deployed these weapons, with every intention of using them against the international coalition and innocent civilians. He was dissuaded from doing so only by the steadfast determination of the United States and the international community.

In the light of what Ambassador Ekeus has uncovered in Iraq, we can conclude only that for the last four and a half years, Saddam Hussein has lied about the full scope of Iraq's weapons programmes. There should be no easing of the sanctions regime against Iraq until its

Government complies with all the demands of the Security Council and clearly demonstrates that it has changed its ways.

The United Nations should also promote responsibility and restraint in the transfer of conventional weapons. At last year's session of the General Assembly, President Clinton proposed, and the Assembly approved, the eventual elimination of anti-personnel mines. On my recent trip to Cambodia, I saw the terrible damage these hidden killers can do. This year, we will again call on other countries to join us in putting an end to the export of land-mines.

Two years ago, President Clinton called on the international community to devise a true international system governing the transfer of conventional weapons and sensitive dual-use technologies. I am pleased that the Russian Federation has joined with the United States and 26 other countries to agree on a common principle to control the build-up of dangerous conventional arms. We hope to activate this global regime, which is called the New Forum, by the end of this year.

The proliferation of weapons worldwide has added a disturbing dimension to another threat we all face: the threat of international terrorism. Indeed, this year's sarin gas attack in Tokyo is a grim warning of what can happen when terrorists acquire weapons of mass destruction.

More nations are joining the fight against those individuals and groups that attack civilians for political ends. The United Nations has supported this effort in important ways. The Security Council recognized the importance of countering State-sponsored terrorism by imposing sanctions against Libya for the bombing of Pan Am 103 and UTA 772.

Terrorists must be treated as criminals and there must be no place where they can hide from the consequences of their acts. States that sponsor terrorists should feel the full weight of sanctions that can be imposed by the international community. Let us not deceive ourselves: every dollar that goes into the Government coffers of a State-sponsor of terrorism such as Iran helps pay for a terrorist's bullets or bombs. Iran's role as the foremost State-sponsor of terrorism makes its secret quest for weapons of mass destruction even more alarming. We must stand together to prevent Iran from acquiring such threatening capabilities.

The United States has taken a leading role in meeting the international terrorist threat. We have intensified our sanctions against Iran. Last January President Clinton issued an Executive Order prohibiting financial transactions with terrorist groups and individuals that threaten the Middle East peace process. We are urging our Congress to tighten our immigration and criminal laws to keep terrorists on the run or put them behind bars.

The United States strongly supports the counter-terrorism measures the G-7 and Russia announced at the Halifax Summit, and we expect the G-8 Ministerial Meeting on Terrorism in Ottawa to produce a concrete-action plan to implement these measures that were adopted at the Halifax Summit.

Other kinds of international crime also threaten the safety of our citizens and the fabric of our societies. And globalization brings new and frightening dimensions to crime. The threat of crime is a particular menace to young democracies. It weakens confidence in institutions, preys on the most vulnerable in our societies and undermines free-market reform.

Of course, every country must take its own measures to combat these criminal threats. The Administration that I represent is now completing a review of our approach to transnational crime, a review that will lead to a stronger, more coordinated attack on this problem.

To help other States deal with criminal threats, the United States and Hungary have created the International Law Enforcement Academy in Budapest to train police officers and law-enforcement officials from Central Europe and the States of the former Soviet Union. We are providing similar help bilaterally, and through the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, to those countries whose laws are challenged by international drug cartels.

A particularly insidious form of crime and corruption is money-laundering. All nations should work together to implement the recommendations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to attack this insidious money-laundering. The nations of this hemisphere should also advance the anti-money-laundering initiative introduced at last December's Summit of the Americas. Together, we must work to squeeze the dirty money out of the global financial system.

Through the United Nations conventions on drugs and crime the international community has set strong

standards that we must now act to enforce. We call on Member States which have not already joined the 1988 drug Convention to do so promptly, and we call on those countries which have approved the Convention to move quickly to implement its important provisions.

We are also increasingly aware that damage to the environment and unsustainable population growth threaten the security of our nations and the well-being of our peoples. Their harmful effects are evident in famines, infant mortality rates, refugee crises, and ozone depletion. In places like Rwanda and Somalia, for example, they contribute to civil wars and emergencies that can be resolved only by extremely costly international intervention. We must carry out the commitments we made last year at the Cairo Conference, as well as the important commitments made at the Rio Conference three years ago.

Never have our problems around the world been more complex. It has never been more evident that these problems affect all nations, developed and developing alike. Only by working together can we effectively deal with the new threats we all face that I have outlined here today.

That is why in this fiftieth anniversary year we must shape the United Nations agenda as if we were creating the institution anew. Just as the founders of the United Nations devised a new framework to deter aggression and armed conflict, the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, must now assign the same priority to combating the threat posed by proliferation, by terrorism, by international crime, by narcotics and by environmental pollution. We should dedicate our efforts in the United Nations and elsewhere to turning our global consensus against these threats into concrete and effective action. We must renew and reform the United Nations not for its sake, but for our own.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Togo, His Excellency Mr. Yandja Yentchabre.

Mr. Yentchabre (Togo) *(interpretation from French)*: Fifty years ago, learning the lessons of two world wars, which in the space of one human generation had brought unspeakable suffering to mankind, people of good will, dedicated to peace and justice and determined to preserve future generations from such horrors, founded the United Nations. To ensure peace, justice and equality; to promote collective security and peaceful coexistence; to encourage economic and social progress for nations and peoples through international cooperation; to develop and promote respect for the rights of man and of peoples, in greater freedom and without discrimination: these, *inter alia*, were the main objectives of the founders of the United Nations.

What lofty goals! And now the time has come when we have an opportunity to review what our common Organization has achieved. This is a difficult but uplifting task, and the big question is whether the objectives have been attained.

Before going any further, however, Sir, on behalf of the President of the Togolese Republic, His Excellency General Gnassingbé Eyadema, and the Government and people of Togo, and on my own behalf, I extend our warmest congratulations on your magnificent election to the important post of President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. The community of the United Nations, in unanimously choosing you to lead our work at this historic session, pays tribute to you and to your qualities as an experienced diplomat and also pays a well-deserved tribute to your beautiful country, Portugal, with which Togo is proud of having excellent and fruitful relations of friendship and cooperation.

We also congratulate the other members of the General Committee. In our view, their experience and your mastery of international affairs augur well for the success of our work. We assure you of the full cooperation of the Togolese delegation to that end.

I should also like to extend the Togolese Government's greatest appreciation to your distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, who presided so adroitly and competently over the work of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. This honour done to his country and also to Africa is particularly encouraging. I should like to say once again how sincerely we admire him.

Mr. Dembri (Algeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

I am also pleased to extend our warmest congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his tireless and unending efforts to ensure that the United Nations continues to flourish and to preserve peace and security in the world.

This session is an event in itself, coinciding as it does with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. A half century has passed, and the various events that have marked the life of the Organization have altered neither the purposes nor the principles of its Charter, which must preserve all its vitality and continue to be the legal and moral basis for present-day international relations.

My delegation would like to pay a tribute to all those whose imagination, creative spirit and intelligence led to the drafting of the provisions of the 111 Articles of the Charter. Their knowledge and ability helped to preserve the world from a third world war, which, in this age of increasingly devastating nuclear weapons, would have been fatal to the entire world, including the owners of the weapons.

In its daily search to ensure the wellbeing of peoples, the Organization has adopted and implemented strategies to respond to world concerns. In this connection, the Agenda for Peace and the forthcoming Agenda for Development bear witness to the United Nations resolve to realize its noble ideals.

My delegation believes that the fiftieth session should give serious consideration to the ways to work out the new approaches that are needed if the Organization is to go forward on solid and increasingly coherent bases in its search for viable and lasting solutions to problems of peace, security and development that pose a daily challenge to the international community. What is important at this session is the lessons we can learn from United Nations activities over the past 50 years that will help us to deal with the enormous challenges the third millennium will bring us.

The aspirations of peoples to participate even more actively in the management of world affairs is evident in every country. My country, like so many others on the African continent, has been buffeted by the winds of freedom and democracy. After more than three turbulent years fraught with misunderstandings among our national political figures concerning the stakes involved in democratization, Togo has now completed its transitional period towards democracy and the multiparty system. This session affords me an opportunity to say that Togo has regained its stability and its customary peace and quiet and that our Government is now actively working to strengthen the bases for a State of law.

Eager to promote national unity, the Togolese authorities are continuing to take all possible steps to establish a climate of peace, fraternity and concord. At their initiative, on 14 December 1994 the National Assembly adopted a law of general amnesty for those responsible for the acts of aggression of 25 March 1993 and 5 and 6 January 1994.

Today, peace and order have been restored, for the people of Togo have been able to surmount their opposing views and achieve reconciliation. They have understood that democratization is a long-term undertaking, one that must be based on the historical, social and cultural realities of a country if it is to be effective and promote political stability, economic development and social justice.

Today, the collective effort to restore our national economy is continuing without interruption and all the people of Togo are determined to give of their best in the rebuilding of what they hold most dear, their homeland Togo, in order to restore its reputation and ensure its active participation in the concert of nations.

Given the still fragile nature of our economy, and in order to ensure the strengthening of democracy, political stability and social unity, Togo calls upon the international community to give its strong support to the efforts our Government is undertaking to achieve the country's total recovery.

As I said earlier, the founding of the United Nations was a response to the yearning of the peoples of the world to live in peace, which is a prerequisite for progress. Today, however, there is still a long road to travel in the attainment of that peace, the principal goal of the United Nations, for the world is still experiencing horrible upheavals and intolerance that daily threaten the hope of our peoples to live in a peaceful and secure world.

Indeed, uncertainty, anxiety and despair still haunt thousands of people, principally because of continuing fratricidal conflicts and poverty. Rivalry among neighbours, fanaticism and ethnic tensions continue inexorably to stoke the fires of discord and create armed conflicts, with all their accompanying horrors.

In Africa, the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Somalia and the situations in Rwanda, Burundi and Angola continue to present challenges to the international

community and to call into question its ability effectively to ensure international peace and security.

With regard to the conflict in Liberia, which is now being resolved, my country welcomes the signing of a new Agreement on 19 August 1995 in Abuja under the aegis of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the installation of the State Council and Transitional Government pursuant to that Agreement.

Togo calls upon its brothers in Liberia to shoulder their responsibilities to ensure the sincere and full implementation of that Agreement. We urge them to do all they can to guarantee the cease-fire, support the new transition institutions and contribute in good faith to disarmament with a view to establishing an environment favourable to the organization of the general open elections called for in the Agreement.

While the international community is witnessing a nascent improvement of the situation in Liberia, the war waged in neighbouring Sierra Leone by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) is continuing, with all its accompanying misery.

My delegation would remind our brothers in Sierra Leone that experience continues to prove the weapons do not provide lasting solutions to any problem, no matter what.

Turning to Somalia, my delegation deeply regrets that no appreciable progress has been made since the last session. Unfortunately, we are forced to state that despite the relative calm there, Somalia has become a country where national reconciliation and the establishment of a Government based on broad consensus are still hypothetical owing to fluctuating allegiances among the clans. That situation continues to contribute to the eruption of violence and hinders the advent of peace to that country.

My Government therefore urgently appeals once again to our brothers in Somalia to enter into a true and solid process of national reconciliation, the sole way to ensure viable peace and establish a Somali State that the international community would regard as representative.

In Rwanda, the situation following last year's massacres is still disturbing owing to the insecurity and intolerance that make peace and stability fragile, jeopardize the return of refugees and threaten to embroil the entire subregion. Given the climate there it is imperative for the Rwandese Government to persevere on the courageous path of national reconciliation so that the country may regain its unity and the political stability essential to its reconstruction.

The international community must also commit itself to lending real assistance to Rwanda's efforts to establish better conditions that will encourage the repatriation of refugees to their country of origin.

In the neighbouring country of Burundi the no-war, no-peace situation is still a matter of concern to my country. Those involved in Burundi's political life must renounce all acts of violence of any kind and demonstrate wisdom and mutual acceptance in seeking solutions to the problems facing them.

In the same spirit, my delegation urgently appeals to all the children of Burundi to adhere fully to the Agreement of Government signed on 10 September 1994 and to do everything they can to implement that Agreement in the interests of peace and the people of Burundi. We believe that they must also try to accept the initiatives of the Central Conflict Prevention, Handling Management and Settlement Mechanism of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which is attempting to organize a round-table meeting of the parties involved in the Burundi crisis.

Here too, the international community must continue to support Burundi so as to enable it to find peace as soon as possible and to continue its development.

Turning to the situation in Angola, the Togolese Government welcomes the resumption of the dialogue between President José Eduardo Dos Santos and the leader of UNITA, Mr. Jonas Savimbi. We noted with great satisfaction the positive evolution of the peace process under way as a result of the Lusaka peace agreement. We welcome the two meetings that took place this year, and we see in them the firm resolve of our Angolan brothers to overcome their differences and set about the irreversible creation of an atmosphere of understanding which alone can foster peace and national harmony.

My delegation greatly appreciates the active role that the United Nations continues to play in the resolution of that conflict, and we would call on the Secretary-General to speed up the deployment of the forces to be made available to the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III).

In Europe, despite diplomatic efforts to find a definitive settlement of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, the situation there remains a source of profound concern to all peace-loving countries.

My Government notes with regret that, in spite of many measures taken by the United Nations, the state of war in that part of Europe persists, continuing to claim countless victims and give rise to flows of refugees and displaced persons. Togo believes that the international community must become more deeply involved in order to stem, if not halt, the tide of massive destruction advancing before our eyes.

In the view of my delegation, it is time for the Serb, Croat and Bosniac leaders to give up the idea of acquiring territory by force and to seek a definitive solution to the conflict through negotiations, with a view to ensuring an irreversible, comprehensive and just solution that would guarantee sovereignty and territorial integrity to all the States of the former Yugoslavia within internationally recognized borders.

The recent positive developments in the Middle East, marked essentially by the adoption of a timetable for the second phase of the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities and the transfer of new powers to the Palestinian Authority, give my delegation grounds for satisfaction. We regard these recently concluded agreements as a great achievement, a decisive step towards the establishment of a Palestinian State.

Togo congratulates the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority for the courage, commitment and initiative they have shown in implementing the Declaration of Principles and the subsequent agreements despite the many dangers that beset the path to peace. We urge them to continue the quest for a settlement of the question of Palestine through negotiations, the path they have chosen, since true and lasting peace unquestionably involves dialogue.

We would appeal to the good will of the international community to live up to its commitments by providing the Palestinian Authority with the necessary economic and social assistance for the development of Gaza and Jericho.

With regard to the Golan, my delegation would urge Israel and Syria to demonstrate far-sightedness, good will and mutual understanding so as to arrive as quickly as possible at an agreement that could bring a just and lasting peace to the Middle East region.

Turning to Asia, Togo welcomes the establishment at various levels of dialogue aimed at peaceful coexistence, and trusts that this political will be maintained.

These various hotbeds of tension, which jeopardize the existence of mankind and which my delegation has just briefly described, are a challenge to our collective conscience and, first and foremost, to the United Nations, the only world structure that can ensure universal peace and security.

On the eve of the second half of its first century, it behoves our Organization to mobilize to combat the evils afflicting the world and that make it vulnerable. That task must be one of our highest priorities if we want to leave to future generations a healthy world based on respect for human dignity, love and justice.

To attain this prime objective, which is to prevent conflicts from erupting or from continuing indefinitely, prevention must increasingly feature in the forefront of the measures taken by our Organization in favour of peace, for it is always better to prevent war than to try to end it. This justifies the great importance we attach to preventive diplomacy.

My delegation believes that the various peace-keeping operations being conducted in countries riven by conflict must be accompanied and supported by the parallel and systematic establishment of mechanisms for a peaceful settlement. The measures provided for in Chapter VI of the Charter must be increasingly employed to this end. "An Agenda for Peace" can achieve its full import only if the United Nations, in its quest for peace, resorts to diplomatic procedures as a means of settling disputes.

The objectives of peace and security that we seek must necessarily also involve curbing the proliferation of weapons of all kinds.

General and complete disarmament is and has for many years been one of the main objectives of the United Nations, whose attainment would bring peace, stability and well-being for all. The energy with which we pursue this goal must be maintained and, indeed, increased, if the hopes of mankind to avoid a new holocaust are to be fulfilled.

To that end, my delegation believes that we must continue to encourage a tangible reduction in the nuclear

threat, the elimination of special fissile materials and the conversion of nuclear installations for solely peaceful purposes.

All these overarching tasks require the unconditional support of all States, and particularly nuclear-weapon States, so that we can use the resources made available through disarmament for development.

Convinced of the need to free our continent from nuclear weapons, the African countries have concluded their consideration of the text of the Pelindaba treaty that would establish Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This instrument, prepared pursuant to the relevant Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), will soon be signed in Egypt. My country welcomes this development as opening the way for the denuclearization of Africa, and contributing to the international trend towards non-proliferation. My delegation sees in the recent indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and in the negotiations now under way in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the resolve of the international community to achieve nuclear non-proliferation and to eliminate other types of weapons of mass destruction.

With regard to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in particular, Togo believes that its indefinite extension is not an end in itself. We have to do everything possible to ensure that it responds to the aspirations of all the parties.

In general terms, Togo proclaims its deep commitment to the various measures advocated by the United Nations for the control of conventional weapons at the regional and subregional levels. We continue to support all initiatives that can facilitate disarmament and arms limitation, for all these measures can help to maintain international peace and security.

Within the context of the items relating to disarmament, my delegation would recall the urgent need to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament. Designed to promote peace and disarmament in various regions, these Centres need financing to function and to carry out their programmes of activities in order to attain the goals for which they were established.

This is particularly true of the Centre for Africa, which has its headquarters in my country. I would therefore appeal to the good will of all Member States to support this Centre by providing it with the help and assistance it needs to carry out its activities and to contribute to the maintenance and strengthening of the peace and security which Africa so sorely needs to ensure its economic and social development.

The Charter which we adopted in 1945 states in its Preamble that the peoples of the United Nations are determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. Fifty years later, we must assess the impact of action taken along the way to resolve the enormous problems of development.

It is clear that serious efforts are made every day to eliminate poverty, hunger, malnutrition, disease and illiteracy. And yet, despite the considerable input of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, we must note that many peoples, particularly in the developing countries, still live in a state of great deprivation and are exposed to all manner of scourges. In other words, the situation in those countries is tragic: more than half a billion human beings live in abject poverty; more than 180 million children suffer serious malnutrition; and more than 1.5 billion individuals have no access to primary health care. All this, as can be imagined, leads to the death of almost 3 million children every year.

This bitter truth is the result of the injustice and inequality that characterize international cooperation relations. In the absence of real understanding and solidarity on the part of Member States, the poorest continue to suffer and the well-off grow ever more opulent. Distortions in economic relations between North and South do not reflect the spirit of our Charter. For decades now, the developing countries have called for the establishment of a new, more just and equitable international economic order, but their concerns are not taken duly into account.

In this regard, it would not be overstating matters to recall that the continued drop in our commodity prices; the sharp deterioration in the terms of trade; the problems relating to access for products from developing countries in general, and African countries in particular, to world markets; and the foreign debt burden are all obstacles that must be removed if we are to accelerate and strengthen the process of sustainable development.

It is important therefore that our partners in the industrialized countries should try harder to understand our problems in order that they may be better able to

support our efforts. This multifaceted support must seek to ensure remunerative prices for our commodities and the necessary technological support for processing these commodities so as to ensure access for our products to international markets. To that end, the international community must provide special assistance to Africa in order to build viable, lasting and competitive industrial structures.

In this connection, my country would invite all those involved in development, and particularly industrialized countries anxious about the future of Africa, to give new impetus to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, two major agencies within the United Nations system established to promote industrialization and the development of trade of the developing countries as a whole and particularly in Africa.

At a time when the globalization and liberalization of the world economy are accelerating as a result of recent agreements made at the Uruguay Round, we should create new opportunities for cooperation to help African countries become part of the world trading system and benefit from the advantages it offers for growth. The basic way to do so is to help Africa, through the appropriate transfer of technology, to progress like other regions and to respond to new conditions governing access to markets in order to become a real actor in the World Trade Organization.

The prospects for Africa's development are not promising because the socio-economic situation is so precarious and efforts made to date to step up progress have proven vain. Indeed, Africa is being crippled under the enormous weight of its debt. In 1994, the debt burden reached $313 billion and today represents 231.3 per cent of its export earnings, or an average of 71.6 per cent of its gross domestic product. Moreover, the continuing drop in official development assistance to African States has put Africa in a very critical economic situation.

Far from accepting this situation as our fated lot and aware that we must rely on our own efforts, this year the African countries adopted, in Egypt, the Cairo Programme of Action, which aims at ensuring the immediate relaunching of Africa's economic and social development through political and economic reforms and a global and coherent strategy. My country is ready to assume its share of the responsibility in the implementation of that Programme.

On the crucial issue of debt, Togo would once again appeal to the international community and to the creditors in particular to consider cancelling the concessional debt rescheduled in the Paris Club. We would urge the adoption of innovative measures to reduce the multilateral debt, including the repurchase of that category of debt with the proceeds of the sale of part of the International Monetary Fund's gold reserves. In short, this question must be addressed on an equitable basis with a view to a lasting solution.

Furthermore, giving new impetus to development in Africa must include the mobilization of financial resources both through official development assistance and through private investment. In this regard, my delegation would invite our partners in the developed countries to renew and strengthen their political commitment to support the recovery of the African economy, for economic and financial stability in Africa will most certainly be in the interests of the world economy.

Togo duly appreciates the efforts of the United Nations and the international community over the past 50 years to promote economic and socio-cultural development. In particular, we hail the initiatives that led to the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development and the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, as well as the Paris Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least-Developed Countries for the 1990s.

It is none the less regrettable that the implementation of these instruments, which were able to take into account the concerns of Africa in various areas of development, has yet to receive the support it deserves for the benefit of our continent and the least-developed countries in particular. Thus the economic and social performance which they should have sparked has not lived up to the expectations of the peoples of Africa.

In view of the present state of development in Africa, the international community must make a substantial contribution towards attaining the objectives set forth, not only of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, but also of other programmes of action. Africa needs to be given specific attention commensurate with its problems, first among which is poverty. Indeed, according to data collected by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the number of the most needy rose from 105 million in 1985

to 216 million in 1990 and may reach 304 million by the year 2000.

The collective security to which all peoples aspire also depends on finding determined and credible solutions to the question of poverty, to which a great portion of the world is subject. Along the same lines, the Bretton Woods institutions must do more to ensure that structural adjustment programmes are politically, socially and humanly feasible for those countries which must implement them. My delegation concurs with the proposals for reform of the international financial and monetary system with a view to adapting them to the needs of our day, to make it more equitable and to allow it to respond to the true aspirations of peoples.

In its search for appropriate solutions to economical and social problems, the United Nations was prompted this year to organize the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen. My country welcomed the holding of that Summit, the first in the annals of our Organization to offer such a marvellous opportunity for deep reflection at the highest level on the issues of human and social development that are of major importance for mankind. My delegation welcomes the 10-point commitments adopted at the Summit and hopes that in implementing those commitments for the benefit of the entire world all our countries will show the fervour that led them to prepare and participate in the Summit.

The Fourth World Conference on Women, held just a few days ago in Beijing, is another illustration of our Organization's determination not to neglect any of the objectives it has set for itself. The Togolese Government, which values women's active role in the development process and accords them rightful pride of place in human society, will spare no effort to implement the recommendations emanating from that Conference. We urge the international community to shoulder its share of responsibility in the implementation of those recommendations so that women can fully play their role in building a peaceful and prosperous world.

With regard to the question of the environment, my delegation welcomes the signing in Paris, in October 1994, of the international Convention on combating drought and desertification, and we welcome most especially the entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Climate Change. However, we do not believe that the signing and entry into force of those Conventions are an end in themselves. In the light of the universal concern of a few years ago over the extensive degradation of the environment and the enthusiasm aroused by the Rio Conference, our countries must take the necessary measures to attain the objectives set forth in those various international legal instruments.

This coming 24 October the United Nations will be commemorating its fiftieth anniversary. It has at times been difficult to put into effect the purposes and principles of the San Francisco Charter, and the results achieved have not always lived fully up to our expectations. But with the beginning of this new phase, one could hope that — on the basis of lessons learned by evaluating the activities of the past half-century and on the basis of Member States' capacity to adapt to the ever-shifting realities of the international context — our Organization will truly live up to its new ambitions.

As it is about to enter the second half of its first 100 years, the United Nations must preserve its universality and consolidate its vitality, through prudent reform and appropriate strengthening of its entire system and its principal organs, including the Security Council, so that justice and equality may triumph.

The enormous tasks awaiting our Organization on the eve of the third millennium require that Member States have greater political will so that the objective of the restructuring and democratization process now under way can be attained to the satisfaction of all, and so that Member States can participate together, on the basis of sovereign equality, in managing the affairs of the world. The same political will is needed in order for development assistance to regain priority status, so that the men, women and children of the countries of the South will enjoy the support that is essential for them to prosper.

In doing all this, an inestimable contribution will be made to the promotion of human rights and the right to development, which is another way of averting threats to domestic, regional and global peace and security.

As for my country, it renews its commitment to the noble ideals of the United Nations, and, as always, it will do its utmost to help build a world of peace and justice for all.

The Acting President *(interpretation form Arabic)*: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam, His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah.

Prince Mohamed Bolkiah (Brunei Darussalam): As we will soon be commemorating half a century of United Nations work, may I start by presenting warm fiftieth-anniversary greetings from Brunei Darussalam to all our fellow Members.

Also, before commenting on our present situation, I would like to take this brief opportunity to thank two groups of people who do not receive much publicity and who I hope will not be overlooked in the general celebration.

First, I think it would be most appropriate at this time to mention those who have served this Organization in the field as representatives of our various agencies or as part of our peace-keeping operations and special missions. Their work has always been at the heart of United Nations efforts. It has given people throughout the world a chance to look ahead with hope, and we wish all who are engaged in this work much continued success.

At the same time, I would like to look outside our Organization and thank our hosts. Here I am referring to the people of New York and all the other cities around the world who for 50 years have accepted the demanding responsibility of being a United Nations venue. Their support and good will have been crucial, and I would like to say how much we appreciate this.

With that, may I now turn to current business and offer the President my congratulations on his election. I am sure he will guide us well during what we hope will be a most successful year.

I would also like to thank the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, for his contribution to our work over the past year and to convey my best wishes to the Secretary-General and his staff.

Given all the recent changes which have taken place in world affairs, our fiftieth anniversary comes at a critical period. I would therefore like to offer a few thoughts on the approach we in Brunei Darussalam would like to see the United Nations taking in the future.

Fifty years ago, at the first session of the General Assembly, President Truman's opening address described the purpose of the United Nations as being

> "to provide the means for maintaining international peace in the future". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, First Session, Plenary Meetings, 34th meeting, p. 682)*

The approach the United Nations took at that time was successful. It certainly stopped great Powers from making war on each other in Europe. However, it also led to the cold war. This is now over, but it seems to have left behind a situation in which there is great potential for instability in the rest of the world.

Much of this, of course, is the result of the changes which have taken place in 50 years. The centres of power have moved, and the danger spots have shifted. We all depend on each other a lot more for peace, security and development. The changes are so profound that many of us feel they may call for an equally profound reform of this Organization.

Brunei Darussalam is a fairly new Member, but we tend to think there is a strong case for this. We believe the United Nations has to adapt to change. We also hope this can be done soon. The future could hold some very serious problems, and they will require a United Nations which is well prepared to handle them.

The very worrying signs of what could lie ahead are already quite clear. There are humanitarian problems on a vast scale. We face social and environmental issues which affect the whole world. There is instability in world financial affairs. Trade disputes disrupt the peaceful conduct of international commerce. There is also what we believe is the most serious concern of all: the development gap between the North and the South is growing wider and wider.

This all means that the United Nations has an extremely challenging agenda as it starts out on the next 50 years of its existence. An international situation now exists in which it is essential that we recognize the stake each of us has in the welfare of all the others. We all have to reaffirm our commitment to working very closely together as United Nations Members.

So perhaps the most encouraging feature of international affairs today is that in every part of the world countries are trying very hard indeed to respond to this new challenge. I also think it is fair to say that whatever can be done by individual countries or regional association is being attempted.

Having said that, however, I must add that there is one thing we cannot do: no country or regional group on

its own can make the whole world stable and peaceful. For this, we rely on the United Nations. It is the only mechanism which can deal with the basic causes of instability. Therefore, I would like to suggest that this is the most important responsibility of the United Nations today. If it is to carry it out successfully, however, I also suggest that there are a number of useful lessons to be learned from recent experiences.

The first of these arises from the crisis faced by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1991. Certainly, we are pleased to see welcome signs of hope in that country.

However, I think it will be very difficult for most of us to forget how badly United Nations personnel have been treated. Nor do we wish ever again to experience the frustration we have felt over our representatives' inability to implement Security Council resolutions.

The Bosnian tragedy has obviously raised a great number of questions. But, above all, I feel, we have been taught one extremely important thing: if the United Nations is to be involved in a future situation like this, its representatives must be given all the resources they need, so that they can carry out their tasks effectively.

A second lesson can be drawn, from the Middle East. We are still hopeful that the peace process there will reach a just and comprehensive conclusion. However, what has been shown in Palestine is what was also evident in Cambodia: peace negotiations and even peace treaties require more than just formal recognition by the international community; practical assistance from us all is needed if the result is to be lasting peace.

The third recent lesson I see for us lies in recognizing to the full that the end of the cold war has made us aware of many other aspects of security which lie deeper than just military defence.

Next year, we hope that a comprehensive test ban treaty will be in effect. Among other things, it would be a most appropriate way to acknowledge the reminders we have had this year of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But it should also mean that everyone accepts that it is unthinkable for nuclear weapons ever to be used again. The ultimate aim now is the abolition of all such weapons. If this is indeed accepted, then the idea of nuclear weapons as a deterrent cannot be logically sustained; nor can the need to continue testing such weapons.

Instead, the logic of the post cold war period applies and leads us to the more modern concept of security. In other words, we should be doing everything we can to take advantage of the peace dividend and work together to solve the great environmental, social and economic challenges we all face.

There is one more lesson I believe this early post cold war period has taught us. It is perhaps the most urgent of all. This is that the increasing gap between the North and the South in terms of development and the possibility of making progress must be closed.

The Secretary-General has suggested an important shift in emphasis for the United Nations — from politics to global economic development. I think the Secretary-General is quite right. It is essential that the United Nations move in this direction. Peace-keeping, though much valued, is a costly, short-term response to global peace. The longer-term solution is widespread economic development. What we do ask, however, is that this be done urgently as time is not on the side of developing nations.

We naturally cannot predict what form the United Nations will take in the next half century of its existence. One thing, however, is beyond question, I feel: the world is even more than ever in need of the moral force of United Nations principles to guide it.

May I assure you, Mr. President, that in its efforts to remain strong and effective and credible, the United Nations has the lasting support and commitment of the Government and the people of Brunei Darussalam.

The Acting President: I now call on the Secretary of State for Foreign and Political Affairs of the Republic of San Marino, His Excellency Mr. Gabriele Gatti.

Mr. Gatti (Republic of San Marino) *(spoke in Italian; English text furnished by the delegation)*: Allow me to begin my address with a personal consideration. Before arriving in New York to participate in this fiftieth session of the General Assembly, I thought over and over about the possible tangible outcome of this debate. In particular, I tried to determine the present power and strength of Member States — and especially of the small ones like my own — in terms of taking decisive actions aimed at preventing, monitoring and managing critical and conflict situations, and, in general, all those circumstances which run counter to the requirements and objectives of the United Nations.

There is no need for too many words to describe all the evils besetting our international community and reflecting the disturbing and serious changes in its attitudes, and, above all, in its mentality. I believe, in fact, that the present situation in the former Yugoslavia alone summarizes and reflects in detail all of these factors.

First of all, there is the war, which, because of its long duration, seems to have been generally accepted as an inevitable condition — a war that is still going on despite all the efforts to find a peaceful, negotiated and political solution; a war that has seen few truces — and those that have existed have not been respected; a war involving many sophisticated weapons, in spite of all solemn bans on them; and a war that is the consequence of speculation and the result of the search for profit at all costs.

The United Nations must have the strength to take a stand against war. It is also evident that resolutions, condemnations, embargoes and the dispatching of peace-keeping forces — which sometimes prove useless, becoming innocent victims — are no longer sufficient. Why should we not admit, then, that the United Nations, especially in the former Yugoslavia, has revealed its weakness and its inability to stop a massacre?

There must be another solution. Let us reflect on more effective approaches and adapt the tools at our disposal to a world that seems to be increasingly pervaded by arrogance, presumption and evil.

Although the United Nations has to its credit important achievements and positive results that deserve general acknowledgment and appreciation, the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation is not merely a commemorative event and cannot be regarded as such. This anniversary must also provide an opportunity to assess, review and, where necessary, make adjustments.

Some structural changes in important United Nations bodies have been discussed for a number of years. A debate is under way on the reform of the Security Council, as is another — with less interest and vitality — on the possibilities for the smallest States fully to enjoy, without limitations, the rights and opportunities granted to them by the Charter.

These are all important issues in which my country is deeply interested. Yet should we not give conflict management and resolution the highest priority? I am referring not only to international conflicts, but also to certain domestic situations, because of the serious violations and the unanimously condemned tragic consequences they entail. They should be considered matters of global concern.

In this context, I must mention one of the most serious aspects of the present situation in the former Yugoslavia, namely human-rights violations. Those rights, enshrined in the documents of the United Nations, of the Council of Europe, of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and in other declarations, are all manifestly being infringed. Offences against human dignity are by far the gravest of all violations. They are based on a non-recognition of the human individual and of the freedom to practise a religion, to belong to a minority, to be different from the majority or even from the minority.

I believe that the greatest challenge confronting humankind, as we approach the year 2000, is the practice of tolerance. War, hunger, the need to find gainful employment, the natural aspiration of individuals to improve their living standards, and class conflicts remain. The quest for supremacy by ethnic groups and minorities, which often results in practices of mass destruction, is no different from the old, repudiated theory of racial superiority, so painfully experienced by Europe during the last world war. We must remember also the total absence of protection for children and the lack of respect for women and their bodies, victims as they are of violence perpetrated on unbelievable racial grounds. These factors have made migrations an almost natural component of our international society.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has warned us of the onset of a new and widespread phenomenon — already seen in some African countries — which will be the logical consequence of the war in the former Yugoslavia. In its appeal, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) refers to the new category of internally displaced persons, who have been forced to leave their houses, deprived of the little property they had and of employment opportunities. At the same time, estimates show a constantly increasing flow of refugees, who have left their countries of origin in search of a place to live and of opportunities, however modest, that would enable them to start a new life.

Thus, future generations will inevitably live in a different society from our own. Their neighbours or colleagues might be of a different colour or race, practise a different religion, perform traditional rites unknown to

us, have different habits and approach problems, and life in general, in a completely different way. To ensure a just and peaceful coexistence, future generations will have to learn how to adapt to this new reality, to understand and accept the principle that people are all equal and free to be different.

Solidarity must stem from this conviction and be translated into consistent behaviour. Solidarity should not be expressed merely through acts of charity or donations of superfluous things, with care taken not to lose one's privileged economic position. There must be a commitment on the part of all States to make solidarity among them a way of life. Hunger, natural disasters and man-made environmental destruction, wars, famines, the endemic poverty of some regions and peoples — which is caused, or aggravated, by bad management on the part of those governing them — are no longer occasional events requiring an outburst of generosity. Today, these factors have become ever-present in the world and call for a concerted and lasting commitment.

Rich countries should make the necessary contributions to helping poor countries eradicate deeply rooted causes of distress by formulating a common, global, responsible and transparent policy. Due precaution must be taken not to overburden programmes agreed upon with administrative infrastructures which could be detrimental to financial resources and delay prompt intervention because of bureaucratic hurdles.

San Marino believes that many other issues deserve attentive consideration and utmost priority.

San Marino believes that it is high time to rethink the tool of the embargo, its effectiveness and, above all, its consequences. In the absence of armed conflicts, the international isolation of a State represents a valid political and moral instrument with which to exert pressure on that State as well as a strong incentive for it to change, especially if it has an anti-democratic regime and does not recognize or respect the rights of its citizens or the rights set forth by international law in its conduct towards other nations.

However, when an embargo is imposed on a country for long periods, it also affects its social and commercial sectors. In this case, the main victim is not the regime but the population, which is already suffering from that system and probably has neither the strength nor the means to change or overthrow it. This is unacceptable.

When the imposition of an embargo results in the misery of a population and in the deterioration of a country's basic structures, including its health-care system, then that embargo must be reconsidered and adjusted to meet human-rights requirements.

Capital punishment is another issue that is extremely important to my country and that has been repeatedly debated in the General Assembly. It is not difficult to understand that certain countries — principally those with a large territory and population — require strong deterrents in order to maintain order and protect their citizens' lives, property and tranquillity. It is also generally recognized that some crimes, atrocities and grave offences need to be severely punished. Nevertheless, the death penalty is too grave a reaction and too great an offence to be accepted by those countries that believe in the right to life, in the possibility of true repentance and, above all, in the possibility of an error on the part of the individual pronouncing the verdict.

The Republic of San Marino cannot disguise its deep anxiety with regard to the problem of armaments and their increase and, in particular, nuclear weapons. We hope for global, controlled and irreversible disarmament. Recourse to the rule of law, to the peaceful settlement of disputes, to mediation and to international forums is the indispensable foundation of a really advanced and civilized society. Unfortunately, the threat and use of force are still considered by many as the only instruments to be used in the survival of a State.

Furthermore, the production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, as well as nuclear tests, have become a pervasive feature of the contemporary world, posing a serious threat to the security of States, to the safeguarding of the environment and to the existence of many individuals. The concept of nuclear power as a deterrent is an elegant expression concealing its real danger. It is a shield dissimulating the desire for supremacy on the part of some States. In short, this is one of the old theories on which anti-democratic and anti-liberal regimes are based. It is our duty to save future generations from the threat of nuclear weapons. San Marino hopes that the opinion of the International Court of Justice requested by the General Assembly may promote the attainment of that objective.

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the last speaker on my list, His Excellency Mr. Roberto Robaina González, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Mr. Robaina González (Cuba) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: There is nothing new in the newspapers these days: "Ethnic tensions growing in various parts of the world"; "Violence claims a three-year-old victim"; "Concerns increase over new outbreaks of dengue fever"; "Fighting continues in the Baltic"; "Young man commits suicide after killing his parents, his brother and eight other people"; and "Children of the third world run the risk of contracting the diseases of the Western world". Is this peace? Is this the new world? Is this the new order to which we committed ourselves 50 years ago? Half a century after the end of that devastating world war are nations really united?

Until a short while ago many of us believed that we had finally distanced ourselves from the danger of world war and that some long-standing confrontations were beginning to be resolved through dialogue and negotiation. However, the threats of a world cataclysm have grown over decades of regional and local conflicts, stirred up by a wide range of motives involving geopolitical, economic and trading disputes as well as ethnic and religious conflicts.

Europe, the veteran of two world wars, which thought it was protected by a number of post-war agreements, is now the arena for a number of confrontations in all corners of that continent. In the Balkans, concentration camps, which we believed had died with Hitler, have once again made an appearance.

Terrorism, originally fomented by certain powerful developed countries, has now turned against those very countries with a lash like the tail of the serpent and now, in order to combat that scourge, they are spending the same millions they had invested earlier in perpetrating it.

Drug trafficking is also terrorizing the major cities, but what promotes that scourge is not the cultivation of certain types of vegetation in the underdeveloped world, but tolerance of drug consumption and covert protection for its production and trade in order to make a profit in those very cities.

Extremism, xenophobia, racism and discrimination on the basis of national origin, creed or gender are proliferating once again, together with the spectre of fascism, which seems to have arisen from the tomb.

Globalization, an all-inclusive term conceived in the interests of the major transnational corporations, is now devouring national entities, sovereignty and independence beyond any limit or reason, bringing in its wake a global invasion of destitution, population growth, mass migration and environmental degradation, which cannot be avoided by even the most powerful of this world.

At the same time, ideological differences, the imposition of measures, isolation and selfish actions of all kinds continue to torpedo our new efforts to integrate into associations, such as the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the recently established Association of Caribbean States (ACS).

An exclusive kind of panamericanism in this hemisphere is sabotaging the aspirations of the community of Ibero-American and Caribbean nations to strengthen their forums of regional concerted actions and to seek consensus to meet their common needs. The country that has arrogated to itself supreme leadership in this area as a manifest destiny has, as it did two centuries ago, been conspiring to abort any regional or international association of peoples that does not fit in with its narrow national interests.

Asia and Africa, which achieved decolonization, are now laboratories in which societies with age-old cultures and a strong tribal heritage are being afflicted with new liberal and Western models that are totally alien to their national characteristics.

Fifty years on, despite all its efforts, the United Nations has not been able to eliminate hunger, poverty, the millions of children dying of diseases that are curable and entire peoples who are longing for a simple glass of drinking water.

The virtual reality in which we are told we live today cannot conceal the nuclear weapons which, as has been asserted, may destroy the planet three times over, as if once were not enough. Nor will the illusion of the future created in the opulent cities so rich in show-windows and neon lights save the world from the waste that is being emptied into the oceans, the contamination of the atmosphere, and the destruction of ecosystems and species, including the human race.

Such news is rarely seen on television in the civilized countries where we are constantly told about marvellous detergents; but how can one cleanse the world of the horrors of war and destitution with such detergents?

Light and shadow, but above all more shadow than light, seems to be the mood of this General Assembly on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. In preparing itself, Cuba has noted with concern the often graceless and vulgar way in which highly developed countries are trying to take advantage of this opportunity to define new economic, legal and political bases for the world. These bases run counter to the true objectives of peace, development, equality and justice, as well as of the preservation and needed restoration of the cardinal principles of the Charter.

In the complex debates of the last few months many tributes have been paid to the argument of limited sovereignty, humanitarian intervention and preventive diplomacy, all set forth in "An Agenda for Peace" in the implementation of which the United Nations is wasting two thirds of its budget.

Those discussions have not been free from brushes with fashionable neo-liberal ideas that equate development with assistance and set up chains of conditionalities disguised as the same good intentions with which the road to hell is paved.

From the bipolar world of the East-West conflict we have moved to the unipolarism of the most powerful, and only the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of 77 have managed to survive, although some have tried to do away with them, silence them or reeducate them, as if the problems of the third world were dependent solely on disputes between the great Powers and their post-war allies.

To the calls by the vast majority of the world for the preservation of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, which are the bases of international law, we have been given answers that seek to destroy those principles for the benefit of a few. Whenever reason raises its head, an attempt is made to trample on the third world's right to development by imposing mechanisms in which the factor of domination is inherent, something this Organization was established precisely to combat.

All the efforts and time we have spent here to establish a new, more just and more equitable economic order have been doomed to failure by the intransigence of the rich, which has made the gap between rich and poor a gulf that is ever-more unspannable.

A great wave of privatization has done away with national structures and is jeopardizing the important but fragile social achievements of mankind in its development.

Streets, parks, cities and even prisons are being privatized, and under this influence it would appear that we are now approaching the privatization of law and of world power, and the United Nations itself is unable to escape from this, for some believe that the bulk of Member States have little or nothing to say in deciding their own destinies.

Let us agree on this: the world has changed. We can repeat it. It is true. But how has it changed?

Notwithstanding the impressive achievements of the human race we are forced to live at the same time with unspeakable suffering that mocks all material and spiritual progress in which we might feel some pride as we approach the new century.

The "civilizatory" crisis began in the richest and most powerful part of the planet and is now spreading to international agencies and into this lofty arena.

The countries of the South cannot desire or continue to support the notion that the North should constantly impose conditions upon it. The countries of the North must listen to our views as well as alter their own patterns of development.

Although it is fashionable to include the issue of human development in the agendas of international discussions, it has been relegated to second place by post-modern technocracies. There are those who celebrate the fall of the Berlin Wall and the breakdown of the European socialist world without realizing that no new world has yet been constructed to replace them and that, on the contrary, many other new walls are growing up around us.

From the centres of world power refined and subtle forms of a new colonization are being imposed as part of national policies and national-security strategies — in other words, of extraterritorial domination.

Cuba knows this by heart. The ridiculous charitable gestures, the crumbs fallen from the table, the alms, all go hand in hand with the cultural and ideological invasion that corrodes peoples from within and neutralizes them as actors on history's stage.

The new ark of the post-modern saviours is predestined to divide humanity into the auto-elect and the excluded. Solidarity, the symbol of love among human beings and the essential attribute of mankind's salvation in every age, is now an endangered species.

Like the model the leadership is seeking to erect on the basis of brutal selfishness, the third world seems condemned to become bogged down in debates on confrontation and cooperation and to abandon the best of the human spirit, which is precisely this solidarity.

And this very Organization which combated colonialism and apartheid with such solidarity has also been changed into a kind of supranational mechanism far removed from its intergovernmental design.

Is there solidarity in the secret contacts and covert understandings that precede the decisions taken by the Organization, which is manipulated in the interests of certain Powers?

Can we regard as solidarity the further invasions to eradicate famine, safeguard peace, restore democracy and support so-called good governments?

Can there be solidarity in a Security Council without transparency and anti-democratic in its workings, which no longer fulfils the principles of the Charter or exceeds them and refuses to abolish the veto power and renounce permanent membership?

What kind of solidarity do we mean when that body, the Security Council, resists even the alternative of sharing its obsolete power fairly with other nations that better represent this world?

In international law we must in no way accept as valid the life-style of those who proclaim as a national philosophy that they have no friends or interests — unless we wish to bring on mass suicide for the planet.

And if we are to avoid suicide, we must definitively support the conclusion of treaties that will completely ban atomic weapons, their technological monopoly and peaceful and simulated explosions and declare a total moratorium on testing until the practice is completely banned. Such treaties must be acceded to by all nuclear Powers without any exception.

For the third consecutive year I have come here mandated by Cuba to address this Assembly and to denounce what has already been denounced, to condemn what has already been condemned, and to reiterate the call of the overwhelming majority of the community of nations.

On the very threshold of the twenty-first century the criminal economic, trade and financial blockade which the United States has imposed against my country for 36 years continues. We have survived the attempt to eliminate us, which has been mocked by the tenacious resistance of my people.

After years of crisis, the Cuban economy experienced a 7 per cent growth in the past year while the budget deficit was reduced by almost half. Inflation, measured by the informal exchange market, was reduced by more than 80 per cent, and at the end of the first half of 1995 the economy had grown by 2 per cent.

Significant economic measures made those results possible, and yet the traditional attention our Government gives to education, health, employment and social security has never diminished.

All this has been possible because since 1959 we have zealously and resolutely defended the commitment made to the fathers of our nation to keep it free and sovereign, 90 miles distant from that great Power that has always regarded us as part of its backyard, as some sort of annex to its own territory.

It has been possible because in this world obsessed to its very soul with buying and selling — while of course deriving profit from the process — we have maintained and demonstrated that one can live with an ethics based on principles, on national unity, on justice, on respect for human dignity, equity, morality and loyalty, and no one — absolutely no one — has the right to question this.

It has also been possible because we have kept faith with the Charter that we signed 50 years ago, with its commitment to respect and require respect for our sovereignty, our national independence and our self-determination, while not allowing interference of any kind in our internal affairs.

There is more. These results have been possible because, free from the commitments of the past, and with the experience of having depended economically on other countries, we have with great sacrifice undertaken the task of building our economic independence.

It would be ungrateful of me if, in speaking of the incredible achievements of the Cuban people, I made no reference to the millions who have stood by us during these difficult years: the dozens of countries and Governments that did not break off relations with Cuba, those that strengthened their relations and those that found the courage to enter into such relations for the first time in the face of unspeakable pressure and threats.

It is precisely now, when trade and foreign investment are beginning to energize the Cuban economy, that a campaign has been launched in the United States Congress to approve a bill that would mock and run counter to the wishes of the majority of nations and harm free trade and all civilized forms of relations between peoples and Governments.

Certain extremist sectors in this country are trying to delay a lasting solution to the conflict between these two countries for many years and to abort the migration agreements signed by both Governments last year.

Only two days ago the House of Representatives took the first step towards this crime in approving that bill which, among other absurdities, proposes an international blockade against Cuba, which is really directed against the whole of humanity.

This is no surprise to us because, apart from gestures from the many friends that we have in this great nation, those who have directed its destiny over the last 36 years have brought us nothing good. However, we trust that there are still honest people who, even without being friends of the Cuban Government, may have the basic common sense to know which side is in the right.

There is also time to stay the hands of those in the Senate and the Executive Branch who wish to stab in the back the future of any attempt at a rapprochement between Cuba and the United States and add new tensions to international relations that are already difficult.

Faced with a world that accepts diversity and differences, that does not turn to us with aggression or isolate or discriminate against us, this North American position is automatically blocked in time and in existence, and is isolated in its attitude towards Cuba in this Assembly.

My country does not question anybody's right to the type of government they desire. We urge no one to imitate our model. But neither can we accept that anyone should impose a different one on us. We affirm this in the strong belief that the democratic, economic and social justice process initiated in Cuba in 1959 has followed an honest path; it has demonstrated its viability, its strength and its capacity to face the challenges of these times and respond to them.

We firmly believe in the authenticity and the popular support underpinning our revolution and our socialism — a socialism as Cuban as our palm trees. We defend our right to life and to our own voice, because in the world of pluralism that we aspire to, plurality and diversity among nations must be respected.

In this Assembly there are documents circulating that prove what I say, as well as vulgar threats and attempts at blackmail against those who are exercising such freedoms, not only because they are ethical in taking the right side in a matter of international interest, but because they have links with Havana.

Diplomacy and politics these days cannot be practised by threatening families that wish to be reunited, or businessmen, members of Congress or politicians who have to resort to bodyguards for their own protection.

What can we expect the next century to offer us if this trial imposed on Cuba by a world Power succeeds?

We need something more than the reiteration of the condemnation of the blockade in this Assembly. Cuba is fully entitled to call for action that would put an end to this madness, because any Member State may be the next victim in the future.

It is high time now to put an end to a conflict which had its origins more than two centuries ago — before socialism emerged, and long before the East-West conflict and the triumph of the Cuban revolution.

Cuba has managed to succeed thanks to solidarity. In its name, we hope that the issue of human rights may cease to be used as political manoeuvring in a way that stains the honour of many decent countries. Alongside the lying and pathetic chronicles of human rights violations in Cuba, the world must recognize that there has been no lack of love, no lack of sacrifice in the salvation of millions of women and children who, because our trade was blockaded, did not have enough food to eat.

The often heroic and painful efforts to secure medicine for the sick, insulin for diabetics, aminofilin for

asthmatics and pacemakers for those with heart conditions must be recognized and acknowledged, because the providers of those medicines and the experts concerned were warned off, boycotted or proscribed by the Treasury Department of the United States.

The world must know that the right to life is deeply jeopardized in Cuba, and that my country is living, working, loving and every day renewing its hopes of a better world in spite of that.

If truth were better valued on the market, the world would correctly identify the most striking victims of the human rights violations in Cuba: the vulgar servants of a foreign Power from which they receive encouragement and resources to conspire against the very land in which they were born to promote the annexationist aspirations of our powerful neighbour.

Moreover, honest people throughout the world can discern among the members of the Cuban community in this country a growing majority who have begun to defend the sovereignty of Cuba, to claim the rights that have also been denied them and works with all our support and all our respect to normalize relations with their homeland.

The world cannot be deceived all the time, least of all the noble and hard-working people of the United States, who daily call out for solidarity with Cuba. Without the blockade, Cuba would more clearly demonstrate its unsuspected reserves of talent and energy and the material and spiritual quality of our lives would be improved. That would enable us to give our modest support much more freely to the cultural and scientific advancement of all mankind and of the United States as well.

It is incredible that in the so-called land of the free, tourists and businessmen are able to travel and invest freely all around the world except to one destination and in one market, which is increasingly attractive and is located only 90 miles from its own shores.

The people of the United States, whose economy, politics, dignity, laws and human rights have also been profoundly damaged, must prevent this seed sown for more than 30 years from becoming a genuine source of national shame, as was its war against Viet Nam.

Let it be clearly understood: Cuba desires normal relations with the United States, provided that a natural feeling of good-neighbourliness, respect and equality prevails between the two countries. But Cuba will never give way to threats and will survive at all costs whatever happens, because it is capable of escaping from crises, but cannot shake off the dishonour of living on its knees. It will not do that. Cuba will continue with its forward movement to change and develop. Our economy, although subject to the blockade, will grow and will provide for and meet the most pressing needs of our people. The powerful infrastructure that we have built up over three decades with what some have called the subsidy that Cuba has wasted well befits a people whose high level of education and culture and a stable land of peace and order. All of this is sustained by the broadest popular consultation and consent and a democratic consensus enjoyed by few Governments.

The changes which Cuba has made and will continue to make in its own way apply not only to our economy, but to our political system, civil society and institutions, in order to make our democracy increasingly genuine and participative. These changes fall squarely within our sovereign prerogative. They have not been made to please anyone outside, especially those who have so altered themselves as to be unrecognizable.

Day by day, minute by minute, Cuba is striving to improve itself, to adapt and survive in this global jungle, where more than ever before survival of the fittest is the rule. The lion may be able to devour the deer, but he has a hard time swallowing the hedgehog.

For this reason, the United Nations must also change and become more democratic, to become the genuine vehicle for development and peace which humanity needs if it is to survive. It must become a forum for dialogue and concord where the principle of the sovereign equality of States is the keystone and foundation.

Many have spoken, and will continue to speak this year, of celebrating the merits and work of the United Nations, which no one can deny. On behalf of my country, I prefer today to commemorate rather than celebrate and to call on this Assembly, 50 years after its founding, to veto irrationality and vote unanimously for the future of mankind.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.